

Imagining a Baby

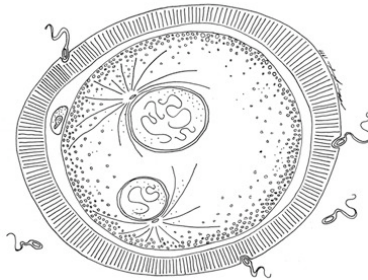
Bob Marcacci



Imagining a Baby

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for
Vito Sante
&
Angela Vita



uterus sheds lining

some women feel
mittelschmerz

egg & sperm meet
journey to center
of the uterus

pregnancy test
measures
pregnancy hormone
you embryo

your mother through early
pregnancy without vomiting
between head & tail
neural folds fuse
your heart beats

laryngotracheal groove
forms primordia of liver
pancreas lungs & stomach
4-6 mm from crown to rump
we call you appleseed
with your bulging heart

your mother's face breaks out
due to hormone changes
appleseed becomes peanut
no one can distinguish
girls from boys
at this point
genital tubercle is present

doctors in China do not want
to see your mother
until the 3rd month
gonads become either
testes or ovaries
spontaneous movement occurs
elbows appear &
ossification begins

you weigh 1 gram \ your toes
begin to form this
little piggy speaks
Chinese this little
piggy speaks none
as placenta matures
takes over hormone production
your mother feels better

you mother can't see / the dr.
this week / when she talks to me
this little piggy cries
wee wee wee wee
all the way home
your eyelids fuse
& stay that way
for a while external
genitalia differentiates

a different Chinese hospital / your
mother has 1st sonogram
i am not allowed to enter
your mother goes
by herself / your head's about
 $\frac{1}{2}$ of your body size
your mother has not changed
much \ your irises
develop fingernails appear

you mother feels a little
better / her abdomen
expands \ your
fingers & toes / separate
placenta takes over
production of hormones
you secrete bile
your heart
beats / about
160 bpm

this week / beginning \
of the 2nd
trimester
you don't look like much
while your intestines
migrate / & 20 teeth
wait under gums
you swallow
amniotic fluid \
you can smile /

your mother visits her
3rd Chinese \ hospital
she has a dark \ line
the linea negra \ down
the middle of her \ stomach
your body systems / work
on their own you / breathe
amniotic fluid which
regenerates itself
every 3 hours it is
partly composed of your urine

\ your eyelids are firmly shut /
/ lanugo covers your body \
your skin is thin
if we could see
you \ we could see
/ blood vessels \
amniotic fluid
may smell of curry
cumin garlic onion &
other essences
in your mother's diet

your nails are well-formed
your head is erect &
you empty your bladder
every 40-45 minutes
your mother thinks \
she feels you move \\
around you quicken /
or flutter \\
like butterflies \\
in the uterus /
as your limb movements\
become more coordinated\

you begin to form fat / under
your skin / it will help
maintain your body
temperature when you are
born / no new structures
have formed / \ loud
noises outside \
the uterus may startle
you / your mother's \
body leaks /
it will go away /
when you are born

you grow rapidly \\ bones
continue to harden\\
fingerprints //
develop / pads /
on fingers & toes
develop \ you /
kick swallow & sleep
intestines collect
meconium
your skin is still
pink & transparent
your 4-chambered heart
begins to build up muscle cells

we get a head shot of you
in the womb your mother
records your heartbeat \
permanent teeth buds form\
behind already formed /
milk teeth buds /
vernix protects \
your skin from \
its aquatic environment /
you begin to store iron /
for the production \
of red blood cells \
you can dream /

the halfway point / your
mother can tell / when
you are awake //
or sleeping //
you practice \ breathing motions
however you could not
survive outside\\
your mother's body \
hair on your scalp \\
starts to grow /
fully functional ears
allow you to enjoy
uterine noise all
your organs are formed

you can still move / all over
in amniotic fluid \\
you form eyebrows / &
eyelashes you wake &\
sleep at regular
intervals you / ingest & \\
absorb large / quantities
of amniotic fluid & \\
excrete urine your mother\
wants to / buy some new
clothes we walked around \\
holiday / Beijing this week \\
merry
christmas

we go to old dragon's head
a loud noise can wake you up
when i put my head
on your mother's belly
i think
i can hear / your
heartbeat / in there
your nose \ takes
on a more \\ defined shape
as cartilage (the
soft bone) \\ appears &
your / testes \ begin
to descend into \
your \ scrotum /
 \ happy / new year

Braxton Hicks \ contraction / your
mother's uterine muscle /
prepares for birth /
lanugo darkens you get
plumper lack subcutaneous
fat your digestive /
system mature enough
to absorb nutrients
sensor systems // mature
bones of inner \ \ ear harden
pancreas develops \
it is important / \
in production / \
of insulin you still \
have lots of room to move around

almost completely formed / you
continue to \ gain weight
in muscles / lungs & other organs
continue to develop /
deposit / brown fat
which will help / you
retain / body / heat
you won't be / able to control
your / body / temperature well
when you / will be born
your mother's fundus
(top / / of the uterus)
reaches approximately
1 & \ / ½ to 2 inches
above her navel
we feel you move often

bones / continue \ ossification
process (they become harder)
the \ structures / of your spine
form \ while blood vessels
of the lungs develop
your / nostrils / open
we / decide to / leave Beijing
the 3 of us
& \ return to / Italy
if we wait any longer
we \ will not be able
to \ leave / with \ you
in your short life
you have already traveled
with us \ in your / mother's womb
around the world 2 times

your oil / & sweat \ glands function
fingernails toenails eyebrows
& eyelashes continue //
to grow until birth /
you respond to sound
& you \ have \\\ dreamed about
heartbeat
digestion & other \ body functions &
external \ noises for a long time
you can /see light /
your veins are visible \
through skin which \ changes
from transparent to opaque
as you add more baby fat
your \ lungs develop \
air sacs secrete surfactant
which \ will help / your lungs
expand at birth

we find / out you \ are
a boy / a very good &
very sad week \\\ for / us
as / we say goodbye
to many friends /
in Beijing your mother
welcomes her \\
3rd trimester /
by \ leaving China
with me & you in her belly
after / watching Superbowl XLI
she cries when we leave
our / apartment your \ skin
wrinkled from floating in water
you will stay that way
until \ a few weeks / after birth
as you \ fill out / your skin

Rome: / not your \\ 1st flight
Putignano: not your \ 1st
train grandma & grandpa
meet us & take us home /
everything is up in the air
your mother doesn't /
even \ have a doctor now
we have questions
about \ episiotomy
fetal monitoring & \\ pain relief
some women's breasts \\ begin
to leak / colostrum /
which / indicates
they can breastfeed \
your mother leaked
from \ the 1st month
as subcutaneous fat / is deposited
we call \ you Vito / & talk to you

a difficult \ week adjusting
to life after \\ China you
grow your \ mother / grows her
internal / organs more
crowded / she cries often
discomforts of late
pregnancy in her back &
legs the amount of air
in her \ lungs / we \\ talk to you
you get \ ready /for \ your
birthday / you /can /
regulate your temperature
you piss about
½ liter / of urine
into amniotic fluid \
everyday your movements
change at this point
we feel \ you hiccup /

your mother's center of
gravity \ changes her \ posture
is important
to your comfort //

your permanent\ // /teeth
wait in your gums
you / are very / aware
of your surroundings
we talk to you \ & read you
The Little Prince \

the uterus / can \ be light
or \ dark / depending
upon our environment
you / mother \ knows
when you are
awake or sleeping
it \ seems like you sleep
when she isn't / we often
walk \ in the / evenings

for the 1st time an Italian doctor
examines / you \ \ while learning
to use / the new machine \\
the dr. says your \ femur \ is long
he says something \ else is long
& we / all laugh & you get
bigger & fill up all the space
your mother doesn't \ have
much \ feeling // in \ her hands
the uterus displaces /
internal organs from /
now on \ you gain weight
faster than you \ will
grow / your irises
dilate & contract \ in
response to light due
to deposits of white fat
under \ the skin / it is no
longer red but pink your
mother's body produces relaxin

relaxin loosens &
relaxes the pelvis \
her body / hair doesn't grow \\
& when / she walks \\
her fundus is about \ 4 inches
above / her navel & she /
itches & she often has heartburn
frequent urination \
constipation or indigestion
did i \ mention / \\
& she would / hate it /
if i said \ she had /
hemorrhoids
you sleep 90-95% \
of the / day your skin
thickens & you gain weight
your movements peak this
week & \ wrinkles / on your
face disappear

your mother gets tired quickly
starts to / do \ birth exercises
with other mothers
in the / hospital \ hallway /\\
she knows where your \ knees
& elbows are & she feels / strange
pains your brain \ continues to grow
& increase the size of your head
you / continue to / develop
fat deposits under your skin
you \ testicles / \ moved
from \ their / location
near kidneys through
groin to scrotum //
amniotic fluid \
almost / 2 pints \ will
remain consistent \ until
delivery surfactant coats
alveoli \ in your lungs &
helps you breathe / after birth

these days it rains often &
we stay inside \ & \ watch TV
you mother \ often takes \
a nap in \ the \ afternoon \
she \ can't \ sleep \
on her \ right side \
hormones from \
the placenta \
activate \ milk
in your \ mother's \
breasts she has \ contractions
at the dinner table & winces \
you can \ grasp \ firmly
you open your eyes \
when awake & close them
when sleeping \
your skin continues
to thicken & you \ develop
antibodies you urinate
almost \ 1 pint each day
 where does it go \

your mother is 100 cm
around her / middle /\\
we can't believe \ it / \
her back / starts to / hurt
you can recognize \
us & / respond
to our voices \
or / we think you do
doctor's "visits" \ include
checking the / cervix
for \ signs of / effacement &
dilation the indication
that \ labor is // not far
i write poems \ / like
there's no tomorrow
it's / my way to \ give
birth to something
your mother keeps
saying she just /
wants \ to see /
your face

you continue to
put on weight /\\
as layers\of fat// \\
pile on & help\\ /
 /regulate\body/
 /temperature &/
develop immunity
in preparation
for life/outside
the womb & the womb
 gets/cramped//\
your \mother feels
 more your\ knees
 /& elbows &\
it is painful/
 \ sometimes \
as\you continue
 to grow &/
 snuggle down
into the pelvis
 your mother
 breathes more easily

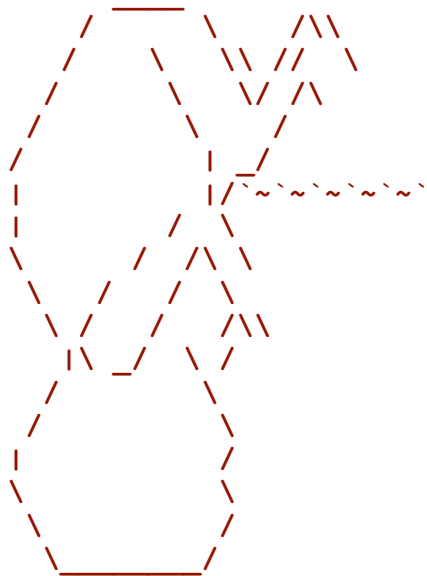
the pregnancy is considered
a "term" pregnancy/\\
at this point\\ // \\
 nothing will be/done
 /to stop labor/in
 most circumstances
 you practice/breathing
movements /by\inhaling
 \amniotic /\ \fluid
discomforts of/pregnancy
wear your/mother down
hands\& feet /swell
she/is tired\
of/fighting her body
 to do what/she wants
 \your mother\
 calls me to/
feel\ her belly
 when you hiccup
 you turn toward
 light & sound

your mother is sick
she coughs horribly\
& worries about you \
she/can't \take/ /\
 /medicine\ & /
 / drinks warm milk
/with honey /\ her
\ belly sometimes
 \feels hard\ \
you moved / a little
lower/& your mother
doesn't have /
 heartburn \ anymore
i / get sick \ too &
 /we spend a /weekend
 \in bed with\you we
 \lay in bed/
 with our / hands
 on the giant
 belly

nothing significant happens
we wonder if\we are\ready
your/mother says// she'll miss
you/inside\her\\ /\
both of us \have/
strange dreams /
every night
with only you\
to hope /for\ \
 \your mother/
started reading\
 another book/
 about natural
 birth babies\
 come in time/
 \ on average\
 \mothers go/more
 \ than 4 / days
 past the due date

we think every day//\
the / same thing// \\
you will \ arrive \
your mother \ / /
 /gets sick \ \
in the mornings
 \ we walk // \
in the evenings`~`~
buy chocolate \
 \ / cigars \
 dr. says /
you're too high
 it's normal \
 for dates /
 \ to be off \
 \ about 4% /
 give birth/
 on their due date

/surpri\ /\ \
/sedy\ou'\ /\ \
/restil\lin\ /t\
/herenow\hatd/
/owedoyousl |u_/
|mberinyour| / '~ ~ ~ ~ ~ \
|mother's\wo\
\mbnowo/ne/\w\
\eek/lat/ \e
\w/e'r/ /\ \
|e_st\ /
/illhere&\
/you'reinth\
|ere9daysbey/
\ondtheninth\
\monthmoret/
\hanapoem/



About the Author

Bob Marcacci is a native of Vacaville, California. His poems have appeared in numerous print and electronic magazines around the world.

Bob hosts the audio poetry program, **i-Outlaw**, available on the internet.



Acknowledgements

The words in this poem are largely comprised of words from the *About.com: Pregnancy & Childbirth* and *Babies Online* websites. Cover image taken from the *BrighamRAD* website. Zygote image taken from unknown *Flickr* source via Google image search.



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Thanks to those of you who continue to provide Bob with your support and interest. Find out more about Bob on his blog: <http://marcacci.blogspot.com>. Send this e-book to someone you know or e-mail Bob with your rage or praise: bmarcacci AT gmail DOT com.